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Duplicate 2\*

THE  
SPHINX'S HEAD BROKEN:

OR, A  
POETICAL EPISTLE,  
WITH NOTES,

TO  
THOMAS JAMES M\*TH\*S,  
CL\*RK to the Q\*\*N's Tr\*\*s\*R\*R.

PROVING HIM TO BE  
THE AUTHOR OF THE PURSUITS OF LITERATURE,  
A SATIRICAL POEM.  
WITH OCCASIONAL DIGRESSIONS AND REMARKS.

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BY ANDREW ŒDIPUS,  
AN INJURED AUTHOR.

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L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR J. BELL, NO. 148, OXFORD-STREET, OPPOSITE  
NEW BOND-STREET.

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SPRING HEAD BROKEN

OF A

POETICAL EPIC

WITH NOTES

TO

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## An EPISTLE, &c. &c.

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**L**ONG *(a)* haft thou reign'd, fell demon of the night,  
 Long aim'd at wit thy shaft, at worth thy spite;  
 Long hiss'd malignant vapours in thy song,  
 And play'd the dark affassin's game too long.

*(a)* It is now several years ago since the little black jogging man commenced Satirist.—He, of all others, to think of such a character! But more of this anon.

But

But shall no bolder arm thy sway difown?  
None hurl thee from thy arrogated (b) throne?  
Forbid thy classic-moulded (c) page diffuse  
The baneful verdicts of a spiteful muse?  
And fix thy hateful visage (d) and thy name  
A dire Charybdis in the sea of fame?  
Is indignation's manly vengeance dead?  
Are patriot sense and patriot spirit fled?

(b) Let none object to this word, for I am sure the little man had no pretension to the imperial seat he has assumed.

(c) It is a prostitution the most derogatory and painful, to see what flippant criticism and illiberal remark are conveyed in *THE PURSUITS OF LITERATURE*, under the mask of *classical erudition*. The little man's politics and his religion are very well; but he is a detestable pedant, and his head is a lumber-garret of Greek quotations, which he raps out as a juggler does ribbands from his mouth at a country fair. How can the public delight in such a *spectacle*!

(d) Prejudice, illiberality, malignity, and satirical vice have seldom been more strongly depicted in any countenance. He looks like what he stands confessed. I wish Lavater had seen him.

Forbid

Forbid it, heav'n!—If abler pow'rs decline,  
Be *mine* the strain, the urgent duty mine (*e*).

When chuckle Becket (*f*) sent thy earlier lays  
In vain (*g*), to seek at Owen's (*h*) public praise;

(*e*) Not but the little man had long remained in his beloved obscurity, for any trouble I should have given myself to drag him from it; but his audacious presumption in defying discovery was insufferable.

(*f*) A good old calf-headed bookseller in Pall Mall, the intimate crony and confidant of little M<sup>th</sup>\*, and who, upon Owen's bankruptcy, published Part IV. of THE PURSUITS OF LITERATURE himself.

(*g*) The world was a long time in discovering the little man's merit; and it is high time now to change its mind once more.

(*h*) Formerly a bookseller in Piccadilly, opposite Bond-street—a grand lounging shop in its day for men of fashion. Hither, the sly little fellow got crony Becket to send his satirical trumpery. Part I. came out in 1794, was called THE PURSUITS OF LITERATURE, or WHAT YOU WILL, and was for a long time noticed by nobody.

I mark'd

I mark'd thy monkey-hop (*i*) full frequent go  
 Th' old caitiff's postern passage (*k*) to and fro;  
 I knew the pestful, mischief-making mess  
 Felt *thy* correction ere it went to press (*l*).  
 Thy HOUSE-OF-COMMONS DRAMATIST (*m*) I knew,  
 Thy KIEN LONG (*n*), thy RANDOLPH LETTERS (*o*) too:

And

(*i*) But little M\*th\*\*s puts me most in mind of a little niddle-noddle figure from Japan.

(*k*) Becket's back-door is in an alley close to his house. Here have I often seen little M\*th\*\*s jog in and sit upon thorns, for fear of being seen, in the back-parlour, chattering matters over with old Numscull.

(*l*) After passing through many hands, the proof sheets at last *very slyly* reached little M\*th\*\*s, that he might revise the learned lumber.

(*m*) THE POLITICAL DRAMATIST OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS in 1795, a satirical, poetical pamphlet, published by Parsons in Pater-Noster-Row, and written by little M\*th\*\*s. Vide his eulogium upon it in THE PURSUITS OF LITERATURE, Part II.

(*n*) THE IMPERIAL EPISTLE FROM KIEN LONG, EMPEROR OF CHINA, TO GEORGE III, with Notes; a pamphlet published by Becket, and written by little M\*th\*\*s.

(*o*) A PAIR OF EPISTLES TO DR. RANDOLPH AND THE EARL OF JERSEY,  
 ditto,

And none those tinctur'd flippancies could see,  
But know at once the motley wight in thee (*p*).

Who marks thy page and shall not quickly say,  
Thou'rt (*q*) GRANTA's son in all but algebra (*r*)?

ditto, ditto; and some more pragmatic riff-raff which might be named—  
but among which is not to be forgotten, a Letter to the Marquis of Buckingham on the subject of the Emigrant French Priests, of a piece with the damnable anathema on the same subject, which Man-mountain has uttered in **THE PURSUITS OF LITERATURE**.

(*p*) It is very remarkable how strongly the characteristic features of identity of authorship are marked in these several pieces: the little man had not even the wit to print them in a different manner. Yet, singular to tell, few, very few, could smell the he-goat.

(*q*) Cambridge. The little man was for some time Fellow of Trinity College. No reader of common penetration will hesitate in pronouncing **THE PURSUITS OF LITERATURE** to be the production of a Cambridge-man.

(*r*) Algebra stands here for mathematics in general, a science a good deal cultivated at Cambridge, as all the world knows; but which little M<sup>o</sup>th<sup>s</sup> cut when he was an Undergraduate. Yet he affects sometimes to strut a little in this too, by way of appearing a man of general knowledge: but he is always very unfortunate. Vide his Eulogium on Sullivan's VIEW OF NATURE, a rum simile or two, &c.

B

Who

Who but a friend had pour'd those labour'd lays  
In Glynn's (s) (obscure Iapis!) fulsome praise!

Who reads thy *hazy weather* (t) but must swear  
'Tis Thomas James M\*th\*\*s to a hair?

Who hears, when joys convivial spread around,  
When watchful care (v) in social chat is drown'd,

(s) Dr. Glynn, Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, a physician quite of the old school, and a son of obscurity any where, save within the walls of the University. He helped the little man in his *candid and comprehensive* Essay (as he himself calls it: vide the P. L.) on the Chattertonian business: they have been great cronies ever since that time; and in return for services and friendship, little M\*th\*\*s lugs the old Monkish quiz into notice, and dubs him "A lov'd IAPIS on the banks of Cam!!!"

(t) See Note (a) to Part II. of THE PURSUITS OF LITERATURE. All who know the little man must be struck with the resemblance. But the notes are like him throughout.

(v) Not that the little man ever gets *tipsy*—no—but it is an amiable weakness of our nature that the citadel of Reason is not always equally guarded.

Who

Who

Who hears thee prate thy page, unfold its arts,  
But marvels at thy mem'ry and thy parts (*w*)?

Shall these and countless (*x*) indicants combine,  
And shall not all confess the strain is thine?  
That long a seeming friend, a secret foe,  
Thou'lt lov'd 'mid cheerful haunts of men to go;

To

(*w*) The little man is indeed very unguarded in this particular. When he converses in company on the subject of his poem, he too plainly discovers that he has it all *by heart*. He can give you ten thousand *nice* explanations of passages, whose force had never come *home* to your comprehension.

(*x*) It were endless to repeat in this place every corroborative circumstance which has lent its help in confirming me that the little man, and none but he, wrote this goodly poem and its apparatus. There is a species of silent and accidental evidence in these cases which hardly bears explanation. Dr. R<sup>\*nn</sup>\*, a high church pillar, and one William Lord M<sup>\*ns</sup>\*, a great man at Cambridge, both intimate cronies of little M<sup>\*th</sup>\*, have been supposed the authors, or to have had a finger in the pie. I shall only observe that they are either of them incapable of writing it singly; and as for their *helping* little

To watch each weakness of unbridl'd ease,  
 Its whims, its failings, in thy page to tease (y);  
 Thy spite on worth (z), on dignity, to fling,  
 And e'en at sacred age (aa) to push thy sting !

Be then thy name, unfolded in my lay,  
 Confess'd and glaring as the noon-tide day ;

M\*th\*\*s, the first has, I am told, publicly denied it, and the last, were it true, had been proud to own it *long ago*.

(y) It is hurting, it is detestable, it is infinitely degrading to the dignity of the human character, to see what a malignant use has been made in the pages of *THE PURSUITS OF LITERATURE* of the confidence and unreserve of social friendship.

(z) Distinction, character, &c.—all alike to the little man, he bowls them down like nine-pins.

(aa) Vide by way of *one*, and that a most shameful instance, what the author of *THE PROGRESS OF SATIRE* (a very sensible writer) properly calls the little man's *brutality* to Dr. Warton. Heavens ! is the world so totally bewildered in the mazes of the *New Philosophy*, as to suffer *with applause* the feeble flame of such a veteran luminary in the literary universe to be *exmited* by such a whelp ?

Thy

Thy classic page, with spiteful venom stain'd,  
Forgot (bb), neglected, punish'd (cc), and disdain'd;  
Thy worth, thy piety, no longer priz'd;  
Thy parts unhallow'd (dd), and thy faith despis'd (ee)!

(bb) I suspect THE PURSUITS OF LITERATURE has had its day—to live very long it could never hope.

(cc) A good horse-whipping from some spirited person of whom he has said impertinent things, would do little M\*th\*s a deal of good.

(dd) What are all these qualities when united with a meddling, malignant, illiberal disposition?

(ee) He ought to be kicked out of company as a *satirical spy*.

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*Non missura cutem, nisi plena cruoris, birudo.*

BEFORE I quit the little man I shall beg leave to make a few general remarks.

I have always considered his *non-descript* production as a performance highly commendable in the discountenance it has shewn of the false politics and false religion of the fashionable philosophy of our day ; and, as a warm friend to the constitution of my country, and a steadfast believer in the truths of christianity, I thank him in common with many, for the able support which he has lent to these *eternal* causes.

As a poet, I grant he is now and then tolerable, but, for the greater part, cold, prosaic, and faulty : as a wit, he is almost always *beneath contempt* : as a prose-writer, he is hasty, ungrammatical, insignificant : as a man-of-reading, well-informed, but perpetually pedantic and disgusting.

The place of that philosophic spirit which should mark in every page a performance like his, is supplied by a flippant, pragmatic, coxcomical turn of mind, which, as it is totally unbecoming the character of such a writer, so must its babblings, on a moment's consideration, appear trifling and short-lived.

Finally, let the eyes of the public be opened ; let it cull improvement where it can, from the dictates of the writer before us ; but let it beware how its good sense is misguided or bewildered by his ill-tempered prepossessions, and let it never forget that his work is besotted by prejudice, illiberality, and caprice !

N. B. I find the little man is become so very popular in his literary character that a forgery has just now been committed upon him.—Vide *The GROVE*, a Satire, by the Author of *The Pursuits of Literature*—a vile hotch-potch catchpenny.

F I N I S.